

# Laighton's Poems.

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# POEMS

BY

ALBERT LAIGHTON.



BOSTON:

BROWN, TAGGARD & CHASE.

PORTSMOUTH: JOSEPH HILLER FOSTER.

1859.

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IN  
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1850

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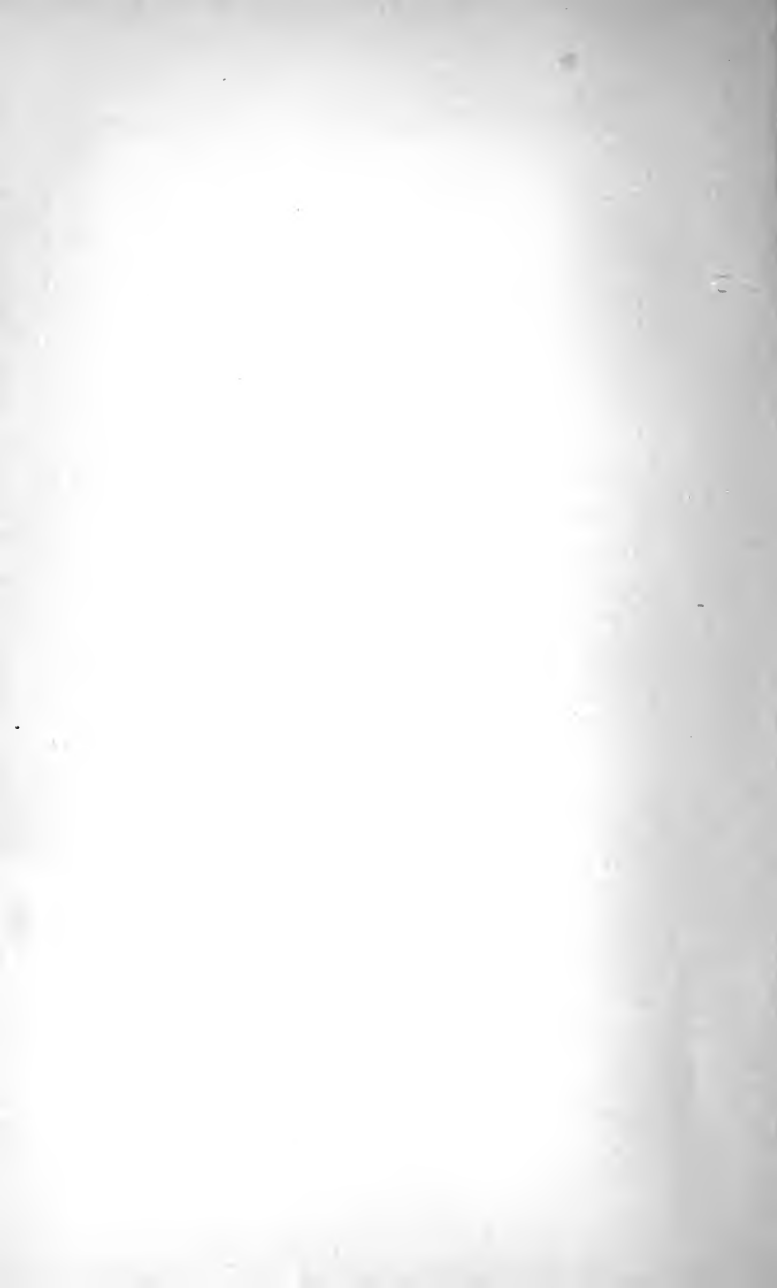
## Dedication.

TO

ANDREW P. PEABODY, D.D.

These few and simple flowers, that, hidden, grew  
Around my heart, I bind and offer you.  
You can but take them, they may soon decay,  
Then idly you may fling them all away ;  
Or, haply, should they joy and fragrance give,  
Or leave some gentle memory that will live  
When I'm forgot, or far away, or dead,  
Then not in vain are their faint odors shed.

PORTSMOUTH, N. H., 1859.



# CONTENTS.

---

|                                 | Page. |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| BEAUTY, . . . . .               | 9     |
| THE BIRTH OF LIGHT, . . . . .   | 29    |
| THE MISSING SHIPS, . . . . .    | 34    |
| AT NIGHT, . . . . .             | 39    |
| FOUND DEAD, . . . . .           | 41    |
| AUTUMN, . . . . .               | 44    |
| NEW ENGLAND, . . . . .          | 45    |
| IN THE WOODS, . . . . .         | 46    |
| SONGS AT MIDNIGHT, . . . . .    | 48    |
| FLOWERS, . . . . .              | 52    |
| THE TRESS OF HAIR, . . . . .    | 53    |
| TO MY SOUL, . . . . .           | 56    |
| OAK AND VINE, . . . . .         | 58    |
| THE CHIMES, . . . . .           | 61    |
| DEDICATION ODE, . . . . .       | 62    |
| THE HOUSEHOLD PET, . . . . .    | 64    |
| THE BREATH OF SPRING, . . . . . | 66    |
| IN THE STARLIGHT, . . . . .     | 68    |

---

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| THE SUMMER SHOWER, . . . . .   | 70  |
| MY NATIVE RIVER, . . . . .     | 73  |
| THE MIDNIGHT VOICE, . . . . .  | 75  |
| MAY, . . . . .                 | 77  |
| JOE, . . . . .                 | 79  |
| IN MEMORIAM, . . . . .         | 82  |
| THE NECROPOLIS, . . . . .      | 85  |
| FLORA BELL, . . . . .          | 87  |
| EBB AND FLOW, . . . . .        | 89  |
| MAY-FLOWERS, . . . . .         | 91  |
| THE VEILED GRIEF, . . . . .    | 93  |
| THE PAUPER'S PRAYER, . . . . . | 95  |
| THE DEAD, . . . . .            | 97  |
| AN INVOCATION, . . . . .       | 99  |
| THE LOVE OF GOD, . . . . .     | 101 |
| A MEMORIAL, . . . . .          | 104 |
| THE PHANTOM, . . . . .         | 106 |
| AN AUTUMN THOUGHT, . . . . .   | 107 |
| THE SUNBEAM, . . . . .         | 109 |
| TO A BIGOT, . . . . .          | 111 |
| HYMN, . . . . .                | 113 |
| GONE, . . . . .                | 115 |
| THE TWO WORLDS, . . . . .      | 116 |
| TEARS, . . . . .               | 117 |
| DEDICATION HYMN, . . . . .     | 119 |



# CONTENTS.

7

---

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| THE BALLAD OF RUTH BLAY, . . . . . | 121 |
| SONG OF THE SKATERS, . . . . .     | 127 |

## SONNETS.

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| OCTOBER, . . . . .          | 129 |
| NIGHT, . . . . .            | 131 |
| DEATH OF A CHILD, . . . . . | 132 |
| To J. G. W., . . . . .      | 134 |

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BEAUTY.\*

I SING of Beauty ! not of that which lies  
Before me now, that gleams in woman's eyes  
And blushes on her cheek, — that were a  
theme

To fill the measure of a poet's dream !  
Not of the matchless tints that painters give  
The pictures of old masters, that yet live,  
Kept sacred from the wrecks and spoils of  
Time ;

Claude's perfect sunsets, Rafaelle's shapes  
sublime,

Correggio's landscapes, and madonnas fair,  
With soul-entrancing eyes and shining hair ;

\* Extracts from a poem delivered before the United Literary Societies at Bowdoin College, August 3, 1858.

Not of the cold, calm loveliness that lies  
In marble forms, that stand before our eyes  
The white ideals of the sculptor's brain ;  
Not of the triumphs won in Art's domain,  
But of that beauty stamped with Heaven's  
    own seal,  
That angels blessed, and day and night re-  
    veal,  
That like a living presence fills the skies,  
And everywhere around our pathway lies.  
When into darkness God stretched forth his  
    hand,  
And out of chaos, at his high command,  
This lower world in perfect order stood,  
Arrayed in robes of light, and "all was good,"  
With shouts of joy the heavenly arches rang,  
And all the morning stars together sang.  
Shall man not join the strain, immortal man,  
For whom He formed this fair and wondrous  
    plan ?

Shall Nature sing and he alone be mute,  
And show no nobler passion than the brute ?

How many varied scenes this world displays  
To fill the heart with joy, the lips with praise !  
Go where we may and Beauty follows too,  
With radiant smiles, and shapes forever new.  
She haunts the spring beneath a fairy's guise,  
With unbound golden hair and azure eyes ;  
A wreath of violets in each dainty hand,  
And round her sunny brow an emerald band ;  
While all day long she strays o'er hill and glen,  
Through leafy bowers, amid the homes of men ;  
And when night falls, from out the echoing dells,  
The lilies ring for her their crystal bells,  
And in the forest's depths she dreams till morn,  
Waked by the music of the wild-bee's horn.

She reigns a queen in Summer ; on a throne  
Of amethyst, with full-blown roses strown

About her feet, she sits in regal state ;  
Millions of tiny beings on her wait,  
With shining wings, and ever to her praise  
With happy hearts sing their melodious lays.

She comes to Autumn, an enchantress rare,  
With trailing robes of gold ; and as in air  
She waves her crimson wand, the ripened  
                  sheaves

Gather with rustling banners ; on the leaves  
A rain of glory falls ; and in the skies  
Cloud pictures rise at sunset, tinged with dyes  
That Heaven alone displays to mortal eyes :  
Calm lakes of amber gemmed with purple  
                  isles ;

Gold-crested mountains, through whose long  
                  defiles

We seem to see the angels come and go  
With harps of light, and white wings waving  
                  slow.

She roams an artist o'er the winter world,  
Whose pencil fair, with frozen dew's impearled,  
Paints fairy pictures on the window panes ;  
Of time-worn castles, groves, and towering  
fanes ;

Of grottoes overarched by blossoming trees,  
And stately ships becalmed in silver seas ;  
Of chasms deep, by cobweb bridges spanned,  
That lead to mountains bright with pearly  
sand,  
Whose crystal peaks, touched by the morning  
sun,

In silence fall, and vanish one by one.

\* \* \* \*

Climb earth's most holy fanes, the mountain  
peaks,

And there her siren voice sublimely speaks ;  
Stand on some rocky strand that ocean laves,  
And watch the long procession of the waves,

As one by one along their sapphire way,  
With measured step they come with wreaths  
    of spray ;  
Or mark the Storm-king as with deafening roar  
He hunts the billows thundering to the shore !  
Or go in fancy to the mystic deeps  
That plummet never reached, where Silence  
    keeps  
Eternal watch ; roam through the fairy bowers  
Festooned with mosses, — those perennial  
    flowers  
That blossom in the peaceful gardens there,  
And Naiads twine amid their flowing hair, —  
Or stoop and take the wreathéd shell that lies  
Close at thy feet ; behold its splendid dyes,  
That Heaven's own bow of light almost eclipse ;  
List to the whisperings of its parted lips,  
As if some happy spirit of the sea  
Filled all its pearly halls with melody —  
And tell me, did not Beauty walk with thee ?



Let Dryads lead thee through the shrouded  
wood,  
Beside their sylvan haunts, where Solitude  
Sits crowned with wild-flowers ; tread the long,  
hushed aisles,  
Across whose emerald floors the sunlight smiles  
Like God's own blessing ; and if there thy  
breast,  
That vainly sighed for some sweet dream  
of rest,  
Forgets its care, and shadows leave thy brain,  
Know that the hand of Beauty soothed thy  
pain.

Leave the vast city with its noisy crowds,  
And watch the quiet glory of the clouds ;  
Golden at dawn, pallid as ghosts at noon,  
Gorgeous at evening, drifting by the moon  
Like icebergs in a sea of misty light,  
Silent and calm, and piloted by Night.

---

Go forth when Morning with its key of light  
Unlocks the dusky portals of the night,  
And watch the Day-king, throned in majesty,  
Trace out a shining pathway o'er the sea,  
While startled shadows from the mountains flee,  
And radiant floods pour down upon the plain,  
And Earth looks up to bless his cheering  
reign.

Or lift to Heaven, at night, thy wondering eyes,  
And read the starry language of the skies ;  
See Cassiopea in her regal chair,  
The golden trail of Berenice's Hair ;  
The Northern Crown, whose jewels far outshine  
All earthly gems, and gleam with light divine ;  
The Pleiades, and Lyra's shining strings ;  
The Silver Swan, the Dove with outspread  
wings ;  
The Twins, that tread their path with one desire,  
And great Orion with his belt of fire !

---

Or turn from these and watch the Northern  
Lights

With jewelled feet ascend the heavenly heights ;  
While with fantastic shapes they haunt the  
brain —

A sky of amber streaked with silver rain ;  
A blaze of glory, Heaven's resplendent fires ;  
A temple gleaming with a thousand spires ;  
A sea of light that laves a shore of stars ;  
The gates of Heaven, swift-rolling, fiery cars ;  
A golden pulse, quick beating through the  
night ;

Contending armies mailed in armor bright ;  
A gauzy curtain drawn by unseen hands,  
Night's gorgeous drapery looped with starry  
bands ;

Vast, burning cities, that lie far away ;  
Blushes on Nature's face — pale ghosts of day ;  
A boundless prairie swept by phantom fire ;  
The vibrant strings of some gigantic lyre ;

Emblazoned chariots ever skyward driven ;  
God's finger writing in the book of heaven ;  
The flaming banner of the North unfurled,  
The mystery that dares a boasting world !

\* \* \* \*

Far from the city's din a spot I knew,  
Where in its pride a stately elm tree grew ;  
I loved it well, and oft, when far away,  
Weary and restless with the toils of day,  
I thought of it ; I saw the children play  
Beneath its shade ; I heard their shouts of joy,  
And wished — vain wish ! — I was again a boy.  
It whispered to me of the woods and streams ;  
It rustled through the quiet of my dreams,  
Making the night Arcadia ; ever fair  
(Standing with giant arms outstretched in air)  
It seemed to me ; whether I watched the  
Spring  
Touch it with light and bloom, or Summer fling

Her garlands dark and dewy o'er its form,  
That nobly braved the fury of the storm,  
Or Autumn tinge its leaves with amber dye,  
Or Winter leave its branches bare and high,  
Pencilled like veins against the cold, gray sky,  
Or wreathed with snow, or hung with icy gems,  
Kissed by the sun, and fit for diadems.

\* \* \* \*

O, when I think how many close their eyes  
To all the beauty that around them lies,  
Dazzled by gold, misled by fashion's glare ;  
When I behold the pallid brows of care  
That ache in factory rooms from dawn till  
night,  
Shut out from every pleasant sound and sight ;  
And when I read with shame of women fair,  
In crowded cities, driven to despair,  
Who labor night and day, half paid, half fed,  
While little children cry to them for bread, —

I do not wonder that the doors of sin  
Stand open wide, and thousands enter in !

O Christian men ! would ye do more to see  
Christ's doctrine lived in all its purity,  
Heed Beauty's holy voices ; let the air  
Fan fevered cheeks and calm the pulse of  
care ;

Give men more time to breathe and ponder o'er  
Great Nature's works ; pay to the toiling poor  
Their honest claims, and hush their pitying  
cries,

And let earth's glory cheer their weary eyes.  
Preach from your pulpits of the love of God,  
That speaks to us forever from the sod ;  
Plant in your prison yards the sinless flowers,  
There let the captive pass his weary hours ;  
They may bring manhood back, and fill his  
heart

With holy thoughts that never will depart ;

Sooner than dungeon bolt or cankering chain  
They'll turn his feet to virtue's path again.

A sceptic once, for treason doomed to dwell  
Within the precincts of a gloomy cell,  
Wrote on his dungeon wall these words of  
scorn :

“All things in nature of blind Chance were  
born.”

The changing seasons as they come and go  
With varied pomp ; the ocean's ebb and flow ;  
The star-fires burning on the steeps of night,  
Unquenched by time ; the floods of golden  
light

That flow in silence from the fount of day,  
Unfettered as the ages roll away,  
Baptizing earth and heaven,—in these he saw  
No ruling hand, no high and perfect law.  
But in the courtyard as he walked one day,  
To while the long and tedious hours away,

A little plant before his careless sight,  
Lifting its tendrils to the air and light,  
Spoke to the captive's soul ; its fragile form  
He sheltered from the rude wind and the storm ;  
And as beneath the gentle rain and dew,  
In strength, and grace, and symmetry it grew,  
Each leaf he counted on the mystic tree,  
Till it became to him Hope's rosary.

And while he watched the swelling buds unfold  
Their fragrant leaves of purple ringed with gold,  
Within his heart, controlled by nobler powers,  
The buds of faith bloomed into perfect flowers ;  
Till with new light, Creation he could see,  
A faultless form, whose soul was Deity ;  
And Beauty's image, that once seemed to him  
A far-off shadow, cold, unreal, dim,  
Rose fair and luminous before his eyes,  
As if an angel came from paradise.  
He pressed its lips, he touched its peerless form,  
And like Pygmalion's statue, it was warm.



Ah, often thus God speaks to erring hearts ;  
When passion sways and faith almost departs,  
He wins them back by some mysterious  
power ;

Sometimes it may be through a simple flower  
That blooms beside their path — sometimes a  
star

May light their darkened way, and from afar  
Bring revelations of that sleepless love  
That falls in constant blessing from above.

\*

\*

\*

\*

While Beauty comes to every human heart,  
And lingers there, unwilling to depart,  
Too many own her not, nor heed her claim,  
But blindly follow some ignoble aim.  
Only the noblest and the pure of earth  
Receive her as a child of heavenly birth,  
An angel sent from some diviner sphere,  
To walk before and smooth our pathway here.

Think of that fearless soul, immortal Kane,  
The new Columbus of an arctic main !  
How in that realm of everlasting snow,  
Amid the dangers of the treacherous floe,  
While Hunger's ghastly face through that long  
night

Stared with its haggard eyes, there blessed his  
sight

A vision of the stars, that filled his breast  
With holy fear and dreams of endless rest.  
Think how he watched the wild flower lift its  
head

In meek surprise from out its frozen bed,  
And felt that there, amid eternal ice,  
God told his presence by that fair device.  
Two guests from heaven sustained and cheered  
him there,

The angel Beauty, and her sister, Prayer.  
O, hero spirit ! thou didst seek no fame,  
Yet nations bow before thy sainted name ;

Thy mission here was filled, thy toils are o'er ;  
No sunless winter now, no barren shore,  
But light, and love, and beauty evermore ;  
For thou hast found at last that " open sea,"  
The soundless waters of eternity. /

\* \* \* \*

As without food the body must decay,  
So with the mind — that, too, must pine away,  
Deprived of sustenance it ever craves ;  
What are men more than brutes or cringing  
slaves,

If sense and appetite alone control  
Their being here ? Starvation of the soul,  
In Heaven's impartial sight, is worse by far  
Than nature's yearning cries of hunger are ;  
For though death claims at last our mortal lives,  
We do not die — the spirit still survives,  
Dwells evermore in some diviner sphere,  
More radiant than that which holds us here ;

Whose very air, and light, and life must be  
Composed of beauty, love, and purity.

\* \* \* \*

Life may be sanctified by care and pain ;  
An earthly loss may be a heavenly gain ;  
And should the clouds of sorrow o'er us  
meet,

And all seem dark before our faltering feet,  
The angel Beauty walks her radiant way :  
O, follow her ! She never leads astray ;  
For where on earth her fairy feet have trod,  
We trace a starry pathway up to God.

How many kingly spirits hath she led !  
How hath she loved the unforgotten dead !  
She dwelt with Shakspeare, and his dome-like  
brain

Filled all the world with one melodious strain ;  
She stood unveiled before great Milton's sight,  
And thrilled his soul with visions of delight ;

And when God's finger touched his holy eyes,  
She turned for him the key of paradise ;  
She pressed her lips on Byron's haughty brow,  
And swept his harp with songs that echo  
now ;

She followed Dante's thorny path to fame,  
And bound his gloomy brow with wreaths of  
flame ;

She sang to Wordsworth, crowned with wayside  
flowers,

And woke within his heart immortal powers ;

She came to Shelley on the skylark's wing,

And in the crown of Burns, the peasant king,

She twined a mountain daisy, wet with dew,

And he was numbered with the deathless few.

She loved the starved boy, Chatterton, and  
when

He turned forever from the scorn of men,

She went in mercy to his lonely bed ;

She smoothed the pillow for his weary head,

---

And arched a bow of light o'er death's eclipse ;  
She put her nectared chalice to his lips,  
And he drank letheon draughts, and closed his  
    eyes,  
And passed with her in silence to the skies.

And if with prayer and praise thy heart is filled,  
Its fever cooled, its stormy passions stilled,  
If thou dost catch faint glimpses of that shore  
Where sorrow dies, and parting is no more,  
And thou canst almost solve death's mystery,  
O, then, God's handmaid, Beauty, dwells with  
    thee !

## THE BIRTH OF LIGHT.

MY form was hid in darkness ; when the earth  
Was void and formless, and the shoreless deep  
Rolled its black waters, sullen and alone,  
Ere man was formed, or any living thing,  
“ God said, Let there be light,” and at his word  
The pall of gloom uplifted, and I flashed  
To life, baptizing with my radiant smile  
A new-born world.

The Almighty viewed me with benignant eye,  
And I stood forth, the glad, immortal Day !  
Above me then heaven’s azure dome was arched ;  
The waters were divided, and the world  
Was flushed with joy ; the emerald grass crept  
o’er

The barren hills, and caught my happy smile ;  
The valleys bloomed with flowers ; the ocean  
heaved

Its breast exultingly, and sang aloud  
Melodious anthems to the listening shore,  
And at God's high command, the pulse of life  
Beat in its hidden and unsounded depths.  
Then living creatures swarmed the fruitful  
land ;

All welcomed me and blessed me for my birth ;  
And last of all, (the best and crowning act,)  
From out the dust of earth He fashioned Mân,  
And in his nostrils breathed the breath of life,  
And he became a living soul, and bore  
His deathless stamp.

My great heart is the Sun !  
My mother is the Night, the holy Night ;  
And God hath made her beautiful, and set  
Upon her dusky brow a glittering crown



Of stars. Though at my birth he parted us,  
'Twas for a few short hours ; for when I see  
The first gem burn upon her coronet,  
I haste to meet her, as with noiseless step,  
She comes to wander o'er a waiting world ;  
And when we meet, she folds me to her  
heart,  
And sings to me such sweet and soothing  
strains,  
I fall asleep upon her dewy breast,  
Nor wake again till morn.

The muffled tread  
Of centuries in their solemn march, awakes  
In me no saddening thoughts of age or death ;  
No shadow dims the lustre of my eye ;  
Though I have seen proud empires rise and  
fall ;  
Though cities, great in their magnificence,  
Have sunk in earth and vanished from my gaze,

---

And nought but crumbling columns mark their  
    graves ;

Though Time's worn trophies thick around  
    me lie,

Its blight falls not on me ; I ever wear  
The same unchanging flush of morning bloom.

I am great Nature's limner, and I dip  
My pencil in the liquid blue of heaven,  
And tinge the violet's leaf ; with gorgeous tints  
I paint the Summer rainbows on the skies ;  
And though their fairy colors seem to fade,  
Their glories are not lost ; for when, with pride,  
The golden-sandalled Autumn walks the earth,  
She showers their splendors on the forest trees.

I am impartial as the air or dew ;  
My blessing falls on all ; the rich man's gold  
Buys not my favoring smile ; I have no frown  
For poverty ; no kindlier falls my glance

On palace walls than on the beggar's hut.  
I stretch my hand through gloomy dungeon  
    bars,  
And beckon the lone captive from his cell ;  
I touch his darkened soul, and sometimes bring  
Tears to his eyes, repentance to his heart.  
I tread where mortal footstep never dares ;  
I kiss the mountain tops, whose hoary heads  
Forever wear a veil of clouds ; I creep  
With shining feet down deep ravines, and chase  
The brooding shadows into viewless air.  
But ah ! the grave — my glances reach not  
    there ;  
Though with my sunbeam fingers I may strew  
Its sod above with flowers, I shed no bloom  
Within ; God's eye alone can pierce its gloom,  
And thou, O man ! through him alone canst  
    read  
Its silent mysteries.

## THE MISSING SHIPS.

O, THOU ever restless sea,  
“God’s half-uttered mystery,”  
Where are all the ships that sailed so gallantly  
away?  
Tell us, will they never more  
Furl their wings and come to shore?  
Eyes still watch and fond hearts wait;  
precious freight had they.

Precious freight! ay, wealth untold,  
More than merchandise or gold,  
Did the stately vessels bear o’er the heaving  
main;  
Human souls are dearer far  
Than all earthly treasures are,  
And for them we weep and pray; must it be  
in vain?

In the silence of the night,  
Did they, with a wild affright,  
Wake to hear the cry of FIRE! echo to the  
stars?

While the cruel, snake-like flame,  
Creeping, coiling, hissing came  
O'er the deck, and up the mast, and out along  
the spars!

As the doomed ship swayed and tossed  
Like a mighty holocaust,  
Did they with despairing cries leap into the  
waves?

Or with folded hands, and eyes  
Lifted to the peaceful skies,  
Calmly go with prayerful hearts to their name-  
less graves?

Did the black wings of the blast  
Poise and hover o'er the mast,

Till at last in wrath they swept o'er the  
crowded deck ?

Leaving not a soul to tell

How the long and awful swell

Of the ocean's troubled breast bore a dismal  
wreck ; —

How amid the thunder's crash,

And the lightning's lurid flash,

(Autograph the Storm-king writes on his scroll  
of clouds,)

High above the deafening strife

Piteous cries were heard for life,

Fear-struck human beings seen clinging to the  
shrouds !

Or with shattered hulk and sail,

Riding out the stormy gale,

Did the brave ship slowly sink deeper day and  
night ?

---

Drifting, drifting wearily  
O'er the wide and trackless sea,  
Loved ones starving, dying there with no sail  
in sight.

Or when winds and waves were hushed,  
While each cheek with joy was flushed,  
As they glided gently on, hope in every breast,  
With a sudden leap and shock,  
Did they strike some hidden rock,  
And go down, forever down to their dreamless  
rest?

Did the strange and spectral fleet  
Of the icebergs round them meet,  
Pressing closer till they sank crashing to the  
deep?  
Do these crystal mountains loom,  
Monuments of that vast tomb,  
In the ocean's quiet depths where so many sleep?

O, thou ever-surgings sea,  
Vainly do we question thee ;  
Thy blue waves no answer bring as they kiss  
the strand ;  
But we know each coral grave,  
Far beneath the rolling wave,  
Shall at last give up its dead, touched by God's  
right hand.



## AT NIGHT.

COME forth, belovéd, to the night !

What though no stars are in the skies ;  
Enough for me the loving light  
That lives within your gentle eyes.

We'll sit together in the dark,  
Beside the meadows cool and damp,  
And watch the fireflies by the spark  
That glimmers from each tiny lamp.

What happy, happy lives they pass !  
What hours amid the tasselled corn !  
What pleasures in the dewy grass,  
That vanish with the light of morn !

They haunt this fragrant summer air,  
While every thing around us seems  
To rest beneath the wings of prayer,  
And breathe the atmosphere of dreams.

Come forth ! peace falls upon my breast,  
Like dews descending to the sod ;  
As if the arms of Nature pressed  
Me closer to the heart of God.

## FOUND DEAD.

FOUND dead ! dead and alone !

There was nobody near, nobody near  
When the Outcast died on his pillow of  
stone —

No mother, no brother, no sister dear,  
Not a friendly voice to soothe or cheer,  
Not a watching eye or a pitying tear —  
O, the city slept when he died alone  
In the roofless street, on a pillow of stone.

Many a weary day went by,

While wretched and worn he begged for  
bread,  
Tired of life, and longing to lie  
Peacefully down with the silent dead ;

---

Hunger and cold, and scorn and pain,  
Had wasted his form and seared his brain,  
Till at last on a bed of frozen ground,  
With a pillow of stone, was the Outcast found.

Found dead ! dead and alone,

On a pillow of stone in the roofless street ;  
Nobody heard his last faint moan,

Or knew when his sad heart ceased to beat ;  
No mourner lingered with tears or sighs,  
But the stars looked down with pitying eyes,  
And the chill winds passed with a wailing  
sound

O'er the lonely spot where his form was  
found.

Found dead ! yet *not* alone ;

There was somebody near — somebody near  
To claim the wanderer as his own,

And find a home for the homeless here ;

---

One, when every human door  
Is closed to his children, scorned and poor,  
Who opens the heavenly portal wide ;  
Ah, God was near when the Outcast died.

## A U T U M N .

THE world puts on its robes of glory now ;  
The very flowers are tinged with deeper dyes ;  
The waves are bluer, and the angels pitch  
Their shining tents along the sunset skies.

The distant hills are crowned with purple mist ;  
The days are mellow, and the long, calm  
nights,  
To wondering eyes like weird magicians show  
The shifting splendors of the Northern Lights.

The generous earth spreads out her fruitful  
stores,  
And all the fields are decked with ripened  
sheaves ;  
While in the woods, at Autumn's rustling step,  
The maples blush through all their trembling  
leaves.

## NEW ENGLAND.

WHAT though they boast of fairer lands,  
Give me New England's hallowed soil,  
The fearless hearts, the swarthy hands  
Stamped with the heraldry of toil.

I love her valleys broad and fair,  
The pathless wood, the gleaming lake,  
The bold and rocky bastions, where  
The billows of the ocean break ;

The grandeur of each mountain peak  
That rears to Heaven its granite form,  
The craggy cliffs where eagles shriek,  
Amid the thunder and the storm.

And dear to me each noble deed  
Wrought by the iron wills of yore —  
The Pilgrim hands that sowed the seed  
Of Freedom on her sterile shore.

## IN THE WOODS.

I WALKED alone in depths of Autumn woods ;  
The ruthless winds had left the maple bare ;  
The fern was withered, and the sweetbrier's  
breath  
No longer gave its fragrance to the air.

The barberry strung its coral beads no more ;  
The thistle-down on gauzy wings had flown ;  
And myriad leaves, on which the Summer wrote  
Her blushing farewell, at my feet were  
strown.

A loneliness pervaded every spot ;  
A gloom of which my musing soul partook ;  
All Nature mourns, I said ; November wild  
Hath torn the fairest pages from her book.



But suddenly a wild bird overhead  
    Poured forth a strain so strangely clear and  
        sweet,  
It seemed to bring me back the skies of May,  
    And wake the sleeping violets at my feet.

Then long I pondered o'er the poet's words,  
    "The loss of beauty is not always loss,"  
Till like the voice of love they soothed my pain,  
    And gave me strength to bear again my cross.

O murmuring heart ! thy pleasures may decay,  
    Thy faith grow cold, thy golden dreams take  
        wing ;  
Still in the realm of faded youth and joy,  
    Heaven kindly leaves some bird of hope to  
        sing.

## SONGS AT MIDNIGHT.

In the West the distant lightning  
Fitfully doth come and go,  
Like the radiant wings of fireflies  
Flashing to and fro.

Every where the mellow moonlight  
Lieth mystical and fair,  
And the cool winds of the ocean  
Fan the heated air.

To our casement, from the garden,  
Where the flowers with dew are wet,  
Floats the breath that parts the fragrant  
Lips of mignonnette.

---

Nothing breaks the dreamy stillness,  
On the earth, in heaven above,  
Save the sound of far-off voices  
Singing songs of love.

How my heart thrills as I listen !  
What dear visions fill my brain,  
As the old tunes, half forgotten,  
Come to me again !

They are songs we sang together  
Underneath the whispering trees ;  
Ah, our holy passion blossomed  
On such nights as these.

They are melodies we chanted  
Years ago, in midnight hours,  
When beloved voices mingled  
Trustingly with ours.

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You are sad and silent, Marion ;  
Tears are in your tender eyes ;  
Are you thinking of a maiden  
Now in Paradise ?

Does she stand once more before you,  
While her sweet voice haunts the air,  
Just the same as when she left us,  
Fairest of the fair ?

Do not weep — the loving Father,  
When he took her gentle hand,  
Led her to the fair, green pastures  
Of the better land.

She may be the Queen of Angels,  
In the bright spheres where they dwell,  
In her music tones surpasssing  
Sweet-voiced Israfel.

---

Do not weep, but sit beside me;  
Listen to the soothing chimes,  
As they seem to peal from turrets  
Of the olden times.

## FLOWERS.

THEY are the autographs of angels, penned  
In Nature's green-leaved book, in blended tints,  
Borrowed from rainbows and the sunset skies,  
And written every where — on plain and hill,  
In lonely dells, 'mid crowded haunts of men ;  
On the broad prairies, where no eye save God's  
May read their silent, sacred mysteries.

Thank God for flowers ! they gladden human  
    hearts ;  
Seraphic breathings part their fragrant lips  
With whisperings of Heaven.

## THE TRESS OF HAIR.

A SINGLE tress of golden hair ;  
A sacred relic kept with care ;  
A memory of one so fair,

That angels left their hymning band,  
And came to earth, to take his hand  
And lead him to the Unseen Land.

But ere he trod the starry way  
That leadeth to eternal day,  
As calm and beautiful he lay,

This curling tress of golden hair,  
This sacred relic kept with care,  
*She* gathered from his forehead fair.

O, lingering o'er the treasure long,  
A thousand tender memories throng ;  
She hears again his cradle song !

And yesternight before she slept,  
She pressed it to her lips and wept ;  
Warm tear-drops down her pale face crept ;

While to her aching heart she said,  
“ Why mournest thou that he is dead ?  
He sleepeth in a peaceful bed.

God called him to a sweet repose,  
And he hath slept through winter snows,  
Till now the dewy violet blows

Above his grave — soft mosses spring,  
And birds on free and happy wing,  
All day their heaven-tuned praises sing.”



---

Ah, yes, with joy the April rain  
Thrills Nature's breast, but mine with pain  
Sigheth — *he* will not come again.

## TO MY SOUL.

GUEST from a holier world,  
O, tell me where the peaceful valleys lie ?  
Dove in the ark of life, when thou shalt fly,  
Where will thy wings be furled ?

Where is thy native nest ?  
Where the green pastures that the blesséd  
roam ?  
Impatient dweller in thy clay-built home,  
Where is thy heavenly rest ?

On some immortal shore,  
Some realm away from earth and time, I know ;  
A land of bloom, where living waters flow,  
And grief comes nevermore.

---

Faith turns my eyes above ;  
Day fills with floods of light the boundless skies ;  
Night watches calmly with her starry eyes  
All tremulous with love.

And as entranced I gaze,  
Sweet music floats to me from distant lyres ;  
I see a temple, round whose golden spires  
Unearthly glory plays !

Beyond those azure deeps  
I fix thy home — a mansion kept for thee  
Within the Father's house, whose noiseless key  
Kind Death, the warder, keeps !

## OAK AND VINE.

FAR out upon the lonely wold  
There stands an oak tree sere and old ;

The sunshine and the dews of spring  
No verdure to its branches bring ;

Decayed and withered, shrunk and bare,  
Like ghostly arms they stretch in air.

For many a year its towering form  
Withstood the whirlwind and the storm —

A leaf-roofed home for summer birds,  
A shelter for the lowing herds.

Once when the blast was wild and loud,  
From out its dusky sheath of cloud

---

The lightning flashed and pierced its heart,  
And tore its sinewy limbs apart ;

Ah, like a crashing sabre stroke  
It sank into that heart of oak !

Then fell its foliage leaf by leaf,  
As joys fall at the touch of grief.

And as around a generous heart  
Cling summer friends, that will not part

While wealth, and joy, and sunshine last,  
But soon forsake when some wild blast

Of sorrow, in an evil hour,  
Sweeps o'er it with destroying power —

So beast and bird upon the wold  
Forsake the oak tree bare and old.

But from its roots there springs a vine,  
Whose climbing tendrils round it twine,

Unshaken by the tempest's rage —  
A garland on the brow of age.

The heart is like the rifted oak ;  
Though sorrow with a fearful stroke

Its budding wealth of joy may blight,  
It leaves it not deserted quite ;

Not wholly wretched and forlorn,  
For, ever in its depths is born

Some blessed hope, that like the vine  
Around the ruin still will twine.

## THE CHIMES.

AGES since, men heard the ringing  
Of the song-bells gently swinging  
    In the starry domes of thought ;  
Long they listened to the chimes  
That the poet's golden rhymes  
    Out of sweetest fancies wrought.

Still the tuneful bells are pealing,  
Waking every holy feeling ;  
    Still they vibrate in the past ;  
And the poet of to-day  
Hears the music far away,  
    Clearer than a clarion's blast !

## DEDICATION ODE.

THERE is a temple towering high  
Within the boundless realm of Time —  
A thought-built palace filled with truth  
And mystery sublime.

In splendor through its shining dome  
The starry light of genius falls,  
And he who will may enter in,  
And king-like walk its halls.

But at its broad and ample base  
The eager throng must vainly wait,  
Till Knowledge with her magic key  
Unlocks the golden gate.



---

In these fair halls she sits enthroned,  
The magic key within her hand,  
Uplifted to the temple, reared  
In Thought's enchanted land.

O, ye who love her radiant form,  
And strive to gain that palace gate,  
Remember, 'tis a noble thing  
"To labor and to wait."

Let no fond dream of wealth or ease  
Your earnest zeal ignobly foil ;  
The laurel wreath of Fame would fade  
Without the dew of toil.

## THE HOUSEHOLD PET.

A HAPPY child, whose clear blue eyes  
Look in our own with winning power ;  
A budding lip where laughter lies,  
Like sunlight on a flower ; —

A voice whose music tones once heard,  
The charmed ear would not forget,  
As joyous as the song of bird —  
Our little household Pet.

From morn till night his tiny feet  
Beat music on the echoing floor,  
And when I come he hastes to meet  
And kiss me at the door.

---

Around my neck his fond arms twine  
With loving welcome, e'er the same,  
And with his fair cheek pressed to mine,  
He sweetly lisps my name.

Without the rapture of his kiss,  
The joy that rests on lip and brow,  
Our home would lose one half the bliss  
That dwells within it now.

## THE BREATH OF SPRING.

THE breath of Spring will steal again  
Bloom-scented o'er the earth,  
And silently the sleeping flowers  
In beauty wake to birth.

Bright birds will flit and blossoms float  
Upon the balmy air,  
And Nature with her vernal song  
Pour gladness every where.

I think of those who lie asleep  
Within the silent tomb ;  
To them the spring-time comes in vain,  
With all its light and bloom.

I dream of her who early sought  
A fairer Spring than ours,  
Of her who died when autumn winds  
Sighed o'er the fading flowers.

She knew that balmier breezes played  
In Paradise afar,  
And sweeter notes than those of birds  
Were sung where angels are.

## IN THE STARLIGHT.

YE fadeless flowers that gem the fields of Space,  
Unseen by mortal eyes what time the Day  
Bathes earth and sky in floods of living light ;  
Whose golden petals to the night unfold,  
All tremulous with beauty, as if stirred  
By airs from Heaven, or fanned by seraph  
wings ;

Ye glittering sands upon a tideless shore ;  
Footprints by angels made in sapphire walks ;  
Caskets that shrine the loved and lost of earth ;  
Bright mysteries that fill the soul with thought,  
Men worshipped ye of old, and read their lives  
By your mild light, and heathen eyes have  
gazed

With holy wonder on your loveliness.

---

Beneath your peaceful splendor I will bow,  
And ye shall be to me the types of God,  
“ The broad and jewelled floor of his abode,”  
My shining home ; and when the Angel Death  
Shall come to lead me there, O, may it be  
In the hushed night, at such an hour as this,  
The heavens as cloudless, and your crystal fires  
As glorious as now, that they may light  
The dusky valley for my fainting feet.

## THE SUMMER SHOWER.

A WHITE haze glimmered on the hills,  
The vales were parched and dry,  
And glaringly the burning sun  
Coursed in the summer sky.

The cattle, in the distant woods  
Sought shelter from its beams,  
Or, motionless and patient stood,  
Knee-deep, amid the streams.

The house-dog lay with panting breath  
Close where the elm trees grew ;  
The bluebird and the oriole  
To shady coverts flew.



Day after day the thirsty earth  
Looked up to heaven for rain ;  
The gardens held their flower-cups,  
The fields their lips of grain.

With doubting hearts, men, murmuring, said,  
“ Our toils have been in vain ;  
We sowed in spring, but shall not reap  
When autumn comes again.”

But while they spoke, within the west,  
At sunset's glowing hour,  
God's voice proclaimed in thunder tones  
The coming of the shower !

The deepening shadows slowly crept  
O'er mountain and o'er plain,  
Until in cool and copious floods  
Came down the blessed rain.

All nature smiled ; and when at last  
The cloudy wings were furled,  
The evening star shone regally  
Above a thankful world.

O love of Heaven ! O fear of man !  
O faith so cold and dim !  
When shall we own the ways of God,  
And learn to trust in Him ?

## MY NATIVE RIVER.

LIKE an azure vein from the heart of the main,  
Pulsing with joy forever,  
By verdurous Isles, with dimpled smiles,  
Floweth my native river.

Singing a song as it flows along,  
Hushed by the Ice-king never ;  
For he strives in vain to clasp a chain  
O'er thy fetterless heart, brave river !

Singing to me as full and free  
As it sang to the dusky daughters,  
When the light canoe like a sea-bird flew  
Over its peaceful waters ;

Or when by the shore of Sagamore  
They joined in their mystic dances ;  
Where the lover's vow is whispered now,  
By the light of maiden glances.

O, when the dart shall strike my heart,  
Speeding from Death's full quiver,  
May I close my eyes where smiling skies  
Bend o'er my native river.

## THE MIDNIGHT VOICE.

FATHER, at this calm hour,  
Alone, in prayer I bend an humble knee ;  
My soul in silence wings its flight to Thee,  
And owns Thy boundless power.

Day's weary toil is o'er ;  
No worldly strife my heart-felt worship mars ;  
Beneath the mystery of the silent stars,  
I tremble and adore.

Not when the frenzied storm  
Writhes 'mid the darkness, till in wild despair,  
Bursting its thunder chains, the lightning's  
glare  
Reveals its awful form —

I wait not for that hour ;  
In flower and dew, in sunshine calm and free,  
I hear a *still small voice* that speaks of Thee  
With holier, deeper power.

Above the thunder notes,  
Serene and clear, the music of the spheres  
Forever rolls, though not to mortal ears  
The Heavenly cadence floats.

## M A Y.

SPRING at its noon of beauty ! Blossoms fill  
The air with fragrance ; every bloom-  
wreathed bough

Is rife with music, and my pulses thrill,

O May, at thy warm kiss upon my brow !

O, it is joy to breathe the golden air,

To feel the zephyrs, as they softly play,

Waft from the heart a weight of care away ;

To let the moments lead our footsteps where

We plucked the violets of our childhood time ;

To roam our native woodlands yet a child,

And know again the joy and transport wild

That flushed us *then*. Sometimes in man-  
hood's prime

Come back sweet memories with the vestal glow

They wore in blissful spring-times long ago.

And though in dreams alone such memories  
live,

Should we lament in tears the happy past,  
Forgetting hours like these ? or basely give  
Our hearts' best wealth for gold ? To-day I  
cast

My fetters off, once more to wander free  
Beneath thy smiling heavens, thou radiant  
May !

Yet while I sing to thee my thankful lay,  
O, there are lips that have no song for thee,  
And hearts that sorrow 'mid thy joy and  
bloom,

And eyes that view thy glories, dim with tears ;  
For, backward gazing through the mists of  
years,

Rise saddened memories from the moulder-  
ing tomb,

And cast a shadow and a blight o'er all  
Thy wide-spread scene of beauty, like a pall.



## JOE.

ALL day long with a vacant stare,  
Alone in the chilling Autumn air,  
With naked feet he wanders slow  
Over the city — the idiot Joe !

I often marvel why he was born,  
A child of humanity thus forlorn,  
Unloved, unnoticed by all below ;  
A cheerless thing is the life of Joe !

Beauty can throw no spell o'er him ;  
His inner vision is weak and dim ;  
And Nature in all her varied show  
Weareth no charm for the eyes of Joe.

---

Earth may wake at the kiss of Spring,  
Flowers may blossom and birds may sing ;  
With joy the crystal streams may flow ;  
They never make glad the heart of Joe.

His vague and wandering thoughts enfold  
No dreams of glory, no schemes for gold ;  
He knows not the blight of hopes, yet O,  
A blighted thing is the life of Joe !

Who would not suffer the ills of life,  
Its numberless wrongs, its sin and strife,  
And willingly bear its weight of woe,  
Rather than be the idiot Joe ?

I think of him in the silent night,  
When every star seems a beacon light,  
To guide us, wanderers here below,  
To the better land — the home of Joe.

---

For He who hears when the ravens call,  
And watches even the sparrow's fall —  
He, in his measureless love, I know,  
Will kindly care for the soul of Joe.

## IN MEMORIAM.

WHEN Spring with gladness filled the earth,  
To us it brought no sound of mirth ;  
We cared not if the robin sang ;  
We watched no blossom as it sprang ;  
Our eyes with coming grief were wet ;  
Anemone and violet  
Put forth their little lives of bloom,  
But *she* was fading for the tomb —  
    Hopefully and trustfully  
    Passing to Eternity.

Now winds are wild and sere leaves fall ;  
A dying glory mantles all ;  
I sit and watch the tears of rain  
Steal slowly down the window-pane.

The wailing of the Autumn blast  
Stirs many a dead leaf of the Past  
Within my soul ; I seem to hear  
The wan lips of the dying year,  
Mournfully, O, mournfully,  
Chant a low, sad melody.

Old voices mingle in the strain ;  
Lost dreams of Youth come back again ;  
Loved forms once more beside me stand ;  
I feel the pressure of *her* hand  
Within mine own ; in angel guise  
She comes to me from Paradise ;  
She turns on me her holy eyes,  
That overflow with mysteries,  
Lovingly, so lovingly,  
Full of immortality.

O, weeping rain ! O, dying year !  
Ye bring her sainted presence near ;

O, moaning wind ! O, falling leaf !  
Ye shall not fill my soul with grief  
For her whose feet so early trod  
The starry steeps that lead to God !  
Whose heart shall never bear again  
Life's weight of weariness and pain.

Tenderly and joyfully  
Thrill the chords of memory !

## THE NECROPOLIS.

THOUGH the sexton, grim and old,  
Turns the mould,  
Damp and cold,  
In the churchyard, for the bed  
Of the still and holy dead ;

Though we see the green turf prest  
On each breast  
Full of rest,  
Full of quiet, sweet and deep,  
Yet not there our loved ones sleep.

O, the graves where they are laid  
Sexton's spade  
Never made !

Nor do sculptured tablets tell  
That within the *heart* they dwell.

Where the winter winds, we know,  
    Cannot blow,  
    And the snow  
Never hides the flowers that grow,  
Fadeless, from the dust below.



## FLORA BELL.

HAVE you heard our song-bird sing?  
To our hearts, as larks to Spring,  
She brings music on her wing;  
    In a nest beside the swell  
Of the blue and hymning sea,  
Beating, beating grand and free  
Its eternal minstrelsy,  
    Dwells and carols Flora Bell.

Many an artless, heart-born strain,  
Set to music in her brain,  
As the rhythm of the main  
    In the bosom of a shell,  
Chanteth she, in tones so clear,  
That methinks the world should hear,  
And its warblers, gathering near,  
    Strive to mimic Flora Bell.

Once her young heart trilled a lay  
Full and fresh with hope as May  
With its blossoms ; far away  
    Its glad echoes gently fell  
On a breaking human heart,  
Bidding all its fears depart,  
Soothing all its woe and smart :  
    Blessings on thee, Flora Bell !

Close beside the hymning sea,  
Chant thy sweet songs full and free  
For a wide Humanity ;

    And though none their power should tell,  
Yet we know above this sphere  
Bends an ever-listening ear ;  
God will bless thee — He will hear ;  
    Keep on singing, Flora Bell !

## EBB AND FLOW.

I WANDERED alone beside the stream ;  
The tide was out and the sands were bare ;  
The tremulous tone of the sea-bird's scream  
Like a winged arrow pierced the air.

I roamed till the sun in the west was low,  
And the robes of twilight trailed in the sea ;  
The waves pulsed in with a rhythmical flow,  
And the nightingale sang a song to me.

All day I roam by the stream of Song ;  
The tide is out, and my life is bare ;  
While shadows of evil round me throng,  
And drearily croak the birds of Care.

But at night the waves roll back again,  
And flow in music over my heart,  
Till the dusky phantoms of grief and pain  
From the charmed shores of my brain depart.

## MAY-FLOWERS.

CHILDREN of the pathless wood,  
Dwelling in deep solitude,  
Born of earth and blessed of heaven,  
Proofs of love that God hath given ;  
Pledges from His bounteous hand,  
Ever fair and sinless band —

When your gentle mother, Spring,  
Heard the happy robin sing,  
Then we saw her, calm and slow,  
Lift the coverlet of snow  
From your tiny forms, and press  
Your pure lips with tenderness.

And we knew she lingered there,  
Whispering words of love and prayer ;

For at last each sleeping child,  
Looking upward, sweetly smiled,  
With the beauty of the skies  
Mirrored in its dewy eyes !

Low winds whispering through the trees ;  
Dreamy murmurings of bees ;  
Notes of birds, and flow of rills ;  
Music that the rain distils ;  
Your sweet cradle songs are these,  
And unnumbered melodies.

O, ye children of the wood,  
Messengers of solitude,  
Ye are dearer far to me  
Than the nurslings of the lea !  
For ye bring to heart and brain  
Childhood's rosy dreams again.

## THE VEILED GRIEF.

O, THINK not that my eyes are dry,  
Because you mark no falling tears ;  
There flows a river deep and dark,  
Whose waters ebb not with the years.

And think not that my lips are mute,  
Because you hear no spoken word  
Full freighted with the tones of grief—  
I hear a voice you never heard.

And think not that my heart is cold,  
Because no passion fires my breast ;  
There is a chamber in my soul  
That only owns an angel guest.

My tears fall inward on my heart,  
And, dew-like, keep its memories green ;  
Sad strains, unheard by other ears,  
Break forth for me from lips unseen.



## THE PAUPER'S PRAYER.

“FAIR lady, in thy silken robes,  
With jewels in thy hair,  
O, leave a while thy thrilling lute,  
And listen to my prayer !

“ Give but a diamond from thy brow,  
A jewel from thy dress ;  
I ask it for a cheerless home  
Of want and wretchedness ;

“ A home where Hunger preys by day,  
Nor feeds itself at night,  
But only shuts its sunken eye,  
To ope with morning light.”

She heard him not, but closer bound  
Her gems about her hair ;  
No comfort for the pauper's home,  
No answer to his prayer.

She cast him coldly from her door ;  
No gem, no gold was given ;  
That lady fair, so rich on earth,  
*But, O, so poor in heaven !*

## THE DEAD.

I CANNOT tell you if the dead,  
That loved us fondly when on earth,  
Walk by our side, sit at our hearth,  
By ties of old affection led ;

Or, looking earnestly within,  
Know all our joys, hear all our sighs,  
And watch us with their holy eyes  
Whene'er we tread the paths of sin ;

Or if with mystic lore and sign,  
They speak to us, or press our hand,  
And strive to make us understand  
The nearness of their forms divine.

But this I know — in many dreams  
They come to me from realms afar,  
And leave the golden gates ajar,  
Through which immortal glory streams.

## AN INVOCATION.

RESTLESS phantoms haunt my brain !

Come and ease my nameless pain,

Sleep — sweet sleep.

I would own thy gentle power ;

It is midnight's holy hour ;

Wave thy charmed wand over me,

Let thy mantle cover me,

Sleep — sweet sleep !

Clasp me in thy dusky arms,

Soothe me with thy mystic balms,

Sleep — sweet sleep.

Let me drink thy letheon wine,

Press thy dewy lips to mine,

Fold my hands and close my eyes,  
Bring me dreams of Paradise,  
Sleep — sweet sleep.

Linger with me till the dawn,  
Leave me not till day is born,  
Sleep — sweet sleep ;  
Then shall gates of rosy light  
Open for thy silent flight.  
Ah ! some time thou'lt come, I know,  
To my heart, and *never* go,  
Sleep — sweet sleep !

## THE LOVE OF GOD.

ALL human love is a faint type of God's ;  
An echoing note from a harmonious whole ;  
A feeble spark from an undying flame ;  
A single drop from an unfathomed sea :  
But God's is infinite ; it fills the earth  
And heaven, and the broad, trackless realms  
of space.

Earth's myriad voices hymn it ceaselessly ;  
The mountains tell it to the peaceful vales  
In tuneful streams and voiceful waterfalls,  
That bear it on and sing it to the sea,  
Until its great heart swells — that restless heart  
Beating forever on the answering shore !  
'Tis smiling in the golden light of day,  
And beaming gently from the starry eyes

That watch at night, a sinful, shrouded world ;  
It speaks to us through odorous lips of flowers,  
And warbles from the singing hearts of birds.

O that all human hearts might join the strain ;  
Then Hate, and Bigotry, and Sin would die ;  
Then Peace would reign and wear its olive  
crown,

And War with blood-stained feet no longer  
track

Earth's fair domain, or wave its crimson flag.  
Then Pride would lay its flaunting mantle by ;  
The cry of Hunger cease — the oppressor's rod  
Would scourge no more, but man be linked to  
man

In one unbroken chain of brotherhood.

O ye whose bleeding feet have weary grown  
In these rough ways of ours — whose brows  
are pierced



---

By the sharp griefs of life — whose lone hearts  
yearn

For human love, and yearn, alas ! in vain, —  
Though time and death have broken one by one  
The few, frail reeds on which ye leaned so long  
And trustingly, and left no earthly stay,  
Good cheer ! there comes at last untroubled  
rest ;

The crowns are thornless that the angels weave,  
And God's love is eternal. /

## A MEMORIAL.

THY harp of life hath lost its sweetest tone,  
Thy fairest flower hath faded at a breath,  
And o'er the sunlight of thy path is thrown  
A chilling shadow from the Land of Death.

Yes! though the sweet and gentle voice of  
Spring,  
Called thy loved child to sport among her  
flowers,  
He knew that soaring on the spirit's wing,  
His sinless soul might reach immortal  
bowers.

And so he rose a seraph from the earth,  
White-winged and glorious; free from suf-  
fering here;

---

He did not die — he changed his mortal birth  
For one diviner, in some radiant sphere ;

Where we shall yet behold him face to face,  
Where tones, and looks, and smiles, that  
    charmed of old,  
Shall live again, and in one long embrace  
Our loving arms his angel form enfold.

O, as ye near that dim and shadowy shore,  
Where break so many life-waves day by day,  
O, shrink not, fear not — one hath gone before,  
With angel footsteps to illumine the way.

## THE PHANTOM.

THERE dwelleth a Phantom within my breast,  
That lieth not down with me to rest,  
But whether I wake or whether I sleep,  
Whispereth ever, calm and deep,  
Like the mystical music that breathes and swells  
Through the pearly lips of the ocean shells.  
'Tis a ghost from the kingdom of Long Ago ;  
'Tis the voice of Memory that haunteth me so.

O, many and strange the songs it sings !  
But their burden is ever of vanished things ;  
And whatsoever the strain may be  
Of the voice that dwells and speaks in me,  
The listening ear of my spirit hears ;  
And I thrill with rapture or bend in tears  
At the varied tones that ever flow  
From the lips of the Phantom of Long Ago. )

## AN AUTUMN THOUGHT.

THEY'RE speeding on — the weary winter hours ;  
These are thy emblems, thou departing year :  
The falling leaves, the fading of the flowers  
Laid by fond Autumn on the Summer's bier.

Soon will the song of lingering birds be still,  
The streamlets lose the music of their tone ;  
For hid with pallid brow behind the hill,  
Stern Winter waits to mount his glittering  
throne.

Well, let the flowers decay, the dead leaves  
fall ;  
Hushed be the birds, and stilled the stream-  
let's flow ;

Let hoary Winter cast a blight o'er all,  
And bind his withered brow with wreaths of  
snow.

We know that May will come, and glad rills  
play,  
And flowers along their emerald borders  
bloom ;  
Though our next spring-time may lie far away  
In some fair clime of light beyond the tomb.

## THE SUNBEAM.

A SUNBEAM through an open door  
Streamed down the death-o'ershadowed aisle,  
And lighted all our solemn gloom  
With radiance like an angel's smile.

It crept to where, within her shroud,  
A sainted maiden lay at rest,  
And gazed upon her pallid brow,  
And slept upon her pulseless breast.

With golden fingers, light and warm,  
It dallied with her raven hair ;  
It kissed her faded lip and cheek,  
As if the flush of life was there.

---

It spread above her pillowed head  
The glory of its gilded wing,  
And whispered to her as it fled,  
“I’ll come to thee again in Spring.

“When thou art laid within the earth,  
By all save loving hearts forgot,  
I’ll strew thy grave with violets fair,  
And woo the wild-bird near the spot.

“And all day long my happy smile  
Shall cheer thy lone and peaceful bed ;  
I’ll be for thee a shining link  
Between the living and the dead.”



## TO A BIGOT.

You strove in vain, with cunning words,  
And subtle arguments, to gain  
A convert to your darling creed ;  
Then mocked me with your cold disdain.

Ah, well — sip from your shallow fount ;  
The heart hath depths you may not know ;  
And your philosophy would fail,  
Did you but judge of Nature so.

You do not hate the mountain stream  
Because it floweth wild and free  
In hidden channels of its own,  
And finds at last its home, the sea.

You do not crush the wayside flower  
Because it wears a different hue  
From that which decks your garden-walks,  
And only breathes its sweets for you.

You do not wound the forest bird  
Because your caged canary sings  
A sweeter song — you vainly think —  
Give me the freedom of *my* wings.

Then if I soar beyond your flights,  
Or if I keep my lowly nest,  
What matter, since I am content  
To serve my God as seemeth best?

## HYMN.

THE homeless winds that wander o'er the land ;  
The deep-voiced thunder speaking words of  
fire ;

The waves that break in sunshine on the strand,  
Or smite with storm-paled hands their rocky  
lyre ;

The stars that blossom in the fields of night ;  
The buds that burst in beauty from the sod ;  
The birds that dip their wings in rainbow  
light, —

Are notes in Nature's symphony to God !

But as Creation's anthem onward rolls,  
From age to age, in grandeur still the same,

---

We set the seal of Silence on our souls,  
And sing no praises to His holy name.

Our eyes are dazzled by the glare of Life ;  
We cannot see the sapphire deeps above ;  
Our ears are deafened by its ceaseless strife ;  
We cannot hear the angels' songs of love.

Dust gathers on our mantles hour by hour ;  
We trail our robes in low and sensual things ;  
We yield our heart-wealth to the Tempter's  
power,  
And stain the whiteness of the spirit's wings.

We fling the priceless pearl of Faith away,  
And count as treasure Earth's corroding  
dross ;  
We bow to idols formed of fragile clay,  
But twine few garlands for the Savior's cross.

## GONE.

GONE ere the daisies flushed upon the lea,  
Or star-flowers twinkled in the shrouded wood ;  
She prayed to live till then. God's will be done.  
O, gently, gently fold her hands in rest,  
And o'er her pulseless breast strew freshest  
flowers —

The mignonette and snow-drop, lilies pure,  
The amaranth, and every fadeless bud —  
Fit types of her who passed so soon to God,  
And of that land where beauty never dies,  
And love is crowned immortal.

## THE TWO WORLDS.

THIS world is bright and fair, we know ;  
The skies are arched in glory ;  
The stars shine on, the sweet flowers blow,  
And tell their blessed story.

But softer than the Summer's breath,  
And fairer than its roses,  
Will be the clime afar, when Death  
The pearly gate uncloses ;

The land where broken ties shall twine,  
And fond hearts will not sever —  
Where Love's pure light shall brighter shine  
Forever and forever !

## TEARS.

TO-DAY I scanned each face I met  
Within the quiet city ;  
None with the dews of grief were wet,  
None with the tears of pity.

Is there no anguish in the world ?  
Is passion calmly sleeping ?  
Is Misery's tattered banner furled,  
That not an eye is weeping ?

Alas ! I knew that every breast,  
In hovel or in palace,  
Must bear the weight of Life's unrest,  
And drink from Sorrow's chalice.

---

But when I thought that CHRIST had wept,  
The sinless One, the lowly,  
I felt that tears of earth were kept  
For prayer, they are so holy.

O weary ones ! the Father hears  
Each stricken spirit calling ;  
His eye beholds your silent tears,  
Though in the darkness falling ;

And wheresoe'er your lot is cast,  
In crowds or lonely places,  
Remember that his hand at last  
Shall wipe them from all faces.



## DEDICATION HYMN.

O FATHER, as in days of old,  
When men knew not thy wondrous love,  
And bowed to gods of wood and gold,  
Thou rulest on thy throne above ;  
Thou art the same unchanging Friend,  
And thy almighty arms defend.

Thy hand still guides each rolling world,  
And stays the tempest's awful wrath,  
And on the bannered clouds unfurled,  
Marks out the lightning's lurid path ;  
It weighs the mountains, holds the sea,  
And stretches through Infinity.

Ah, little human hands can do  
When measured by the matchless power

That raised the hills, and arched the blue  
Wide heavens that bless us every hour ;  
That made our frames, sustains our lives,  
And through all earthly change survives.

Yet, Lord, we offer to thee now  
This temple built on hallowed ground ;  
O, bless its walls ! for while we bow,  
The sainted dead seem lingering round,  
As if with us they hither came,  
To own this tribute to thy name.

## THE BALLAD OF RUTH BLAY.

An old lady, who was present at the execution of Ruth Blay, said, as Ruth was carried through the streets, her shrieks filled the air. She was dressed in silk, and was driven under the gallows in a cart. Public sympathy was awakened for her, and her friends had procured from the governor a reprieve, which would have soon resulted in her pardon; for circumstances afterwards showed that her concealed child was probably still-born, and she was no murderess. The hour for her execution arrived, and the sheriff, not wishing, it is said, to be late to his dinner, ordered the cart to be driven away, and the unfortunate woman was left hanging from the gallows, a sacrifice to misguided judgment. If we are rightly informed, she was a girl of good education for her day, having been a school-mistress. The indignation of the populace can hardly be conceived when it was ascertained that a reprieve from the governor came a few minutes after her spirit had been hastened away. They gathered that evening around the residence of Sheriff Packer, and an effigy was there erected, bearing this inscription :—

Am I to lose my dinner  
This woman for to hang?  
Come, draw away the cart, my boys;  
Don't stop to say amen.

— *Rambles About Portsmouth.*

IN the worn and dusty annals  
Of our old and quiet town,  
With its streets of leafy beauty,  
And its houses quaint and brown,—

With its dear associations,  
Hallowed by the touch of Time,—  
You may read this thrilling legend,  
This sad tale of wrong and crime.

IN the drear month of December,  
Ninety years ago to-day,  
Hundreds of the village people  
Saw the hanging of Ruth Blay ;—

Saw her, clothed in silk and satin,  
Borne beneath the gallows-tree,  
Dressed as in her wedding garments,  
Soon the bride of Death to be ;—

Saw her tears of shame and anguish,  
Heard her shrieks of wild despair  
Echo through the neighboring woodlands,  
Thrill the clear and frosty air ; —

Till their hearts were moved to pity  
At her fear and agony :  
“Doomed to die,” they said, “unjustly,  
Weak, but innocent is she.”

When at last, in tones of warning,  
From its high and airy tower,  
Slowly, with its tongue of iron,  
Tolled the bell the fatal hour.

Like the sound of distant billows,  
When the storm is wild and loud,  
Breaking on the rocky headlands,  
Ran a murmur through the crowd.

And a voice among them shouted,  
“ Pause before the deed is done ;  
We have asked reprieve and pardon  
For the poor, misguided one.”

But these words of Sheriff Packer  
Rang above the swelling noise :  
“ Must I wait and lose my dinner ?  
Draw away the cart, my boys !”

Fold thy hands in prayer, O woman !  
Take thy last look of the sea ;  
Take thy last look of the landscape ;  
God be merciful to thee !

Stifled groans, a gasp, a shudder,  
And the guilty deed was done ;  
On a scene of cruel murder  
Coldly looked the Winter sun.

---

Then the people, pale with horror,  
Looked with sudden awe behind,  
As a field of grain in Autumn  
Turns before a passing wind ;

For distinctly in the distance,  
In the long and frozen street,  
They could hear the ringing echoes  
Of a horse's sounding feet.

Nearer came the sound and louder,  
Till a steed with panting breath,  
From its sides the white foam dripping,  
Halted at the scene of death ;

And a messenger alighted,  
Crying to the crowd, " Make way !  
This I bear to Sheriff Packer ;  
'Tis a pardon for Ruth Blay ! "

But they answered not nor heeded,  
For the last fond hope had fled ;  
In their deep and speechless sorrow,  
Pointing only to the dead.

And that night, with burning bosoms,  
Muttering curses fierce and loud,  
At the house of Sheriff Packer  
Gathered the indignant crowd, —

Shouting, as upon a gallows  
A grim effigy they bore,  
“Be the name of Thomas Packer  
A reproach forevermore !”



## SONG OF THE SKATERS.

THOUGH winter winds are whistling loud,  
And skies look cold and gray,  
Though earth lies mute beneath her shroud,  
The skaters ! what care they ?  
A happy throng,  
With mirth and song,  
O'er fields of ice we swiftly glide,  
As sea-birds sail above the tide.

O, well we know the winter hours  
Fly faster as we sing —  
That sooner come the birds and flowers  
And loveliness of Spring ;  
So, night or day,  
Away ! away !

O'er crystal plains, with mirth and song,  
We speed, we speed like the wind along!

The heated room, the crowded hall,  
Where pride and fashion meet,  
While waves of music rise and fall  
In time to dancing feet —

We seek not these ;  
Give us the breeze,  
And the gleaming floor o'er which we go  
Like arrows shot from the hunter's bow.

Then loud the stormy winds may blow,  
And skies look cold and gray ;  
Then earth may wear her robe of snow —  
We'll laugh the hours away !

With mirth and song,  
A merry throng,  
O'er fields of ice we'll swiftly glide,  
As sea-birds sail above the tide.

## OCTOBER.

OCTOBER, ruddy-cheeked, comes o'er the plains,  
And as with rustling step it speeds along,  
Its feet beat music to the harvest song,  
Far echoing loud and clear, as loaded wains  
Bear on the golden grain 'neath sheltering  
eaves.

The woodlands now are tinged with gorgeous  
dyes,  
And seem to borrow from the sunset skies  
Their varied tints: but soon, too soon, the  
leaves

Will fall like tears above the Summer's grave,  
The lingering birds will sing their parting  
lay,  
And o'er this brightness withering to decay,

---

The chill November blast will beat and rave.  
O, fading glories of the Autumn hour,  
How like ye are to man's vain pride and  
power!

## SONNET.

NIGHT and its dewes come silently to earth,  
Like kindred mourners to the grave of Day ;  
The stars look on with pale and trembling ray,  
As if through tears to watch them on their  
way.

O, holy Night, what thoughts awake to birth,  
That slumber in the day, amid its din,  
And restless strife for gain, its glare and sin !  
But Night, care-soothing Night, O, I would  
win

Thy Crown of Peace, and wear it on my brow ;  
Here at thy starry throne I bend my knee,  
All weak and humbled. I look up to thee,  
And bless thee for the joy thou giv'st me now —  
A joy so hushed and deep, I tremble, lest  
Dream-like, it fade away within my breast.

## SONNET

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

BEFORE me, in the cold, white arms of Death,  
He lies in dreamless slumber ; on his breast  
His hands are folded peacefully in rest,  
And through his pale lips steals no gentle  
breath ;

Unearthly beauty dwells upon his brow,  
And lovelier seem his closéd eyes the while,  
Than when they kindled at a mother's smile.

O beauteous child, Death is thy mother now,  
And she hath charmed thee to a halcyon  
sleep,

And waits to lay thee in thy little bed  
Among the flowers ; above the sinless dead  
My tears are falling, yet I only weep

---

To think that when to thee, O Death, my soul  
is given,  
It will not soar on such a stainless wing to  
Heaven.

## SONNET.

TO J. G. W.

THE world is wanting in great souls like thine,  
For thou art one, who, scorning hate and  
blame,

Dost dare to battle in dear Freedom's name,  
As if thy heart was mailed with power divine.

Thou art a hater of all human wrong,  
And thy barbed thoughts at Tyranny are  
hurled.

Thou break'st the silence of the slumbering  
world,

With sounding notes of deep and burning  
song,

Unnerving arms that wield Oppression's rod ;  
Or with the music of some gentler strain,



---

Thou steal'st from life its weariness and pain.  
O Poet ! thou hast gained the smile of God,  
And won on earth a high and star-like name,  
To shine forever in the sky of Fame. /

THE END.











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